

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

homemakers' chat

OR USE IN NON-COMMERCIAL BROADCASTS ONLY

U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

1934 R
-Reserve
WEDNESDAY, August 4, 1943.

U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

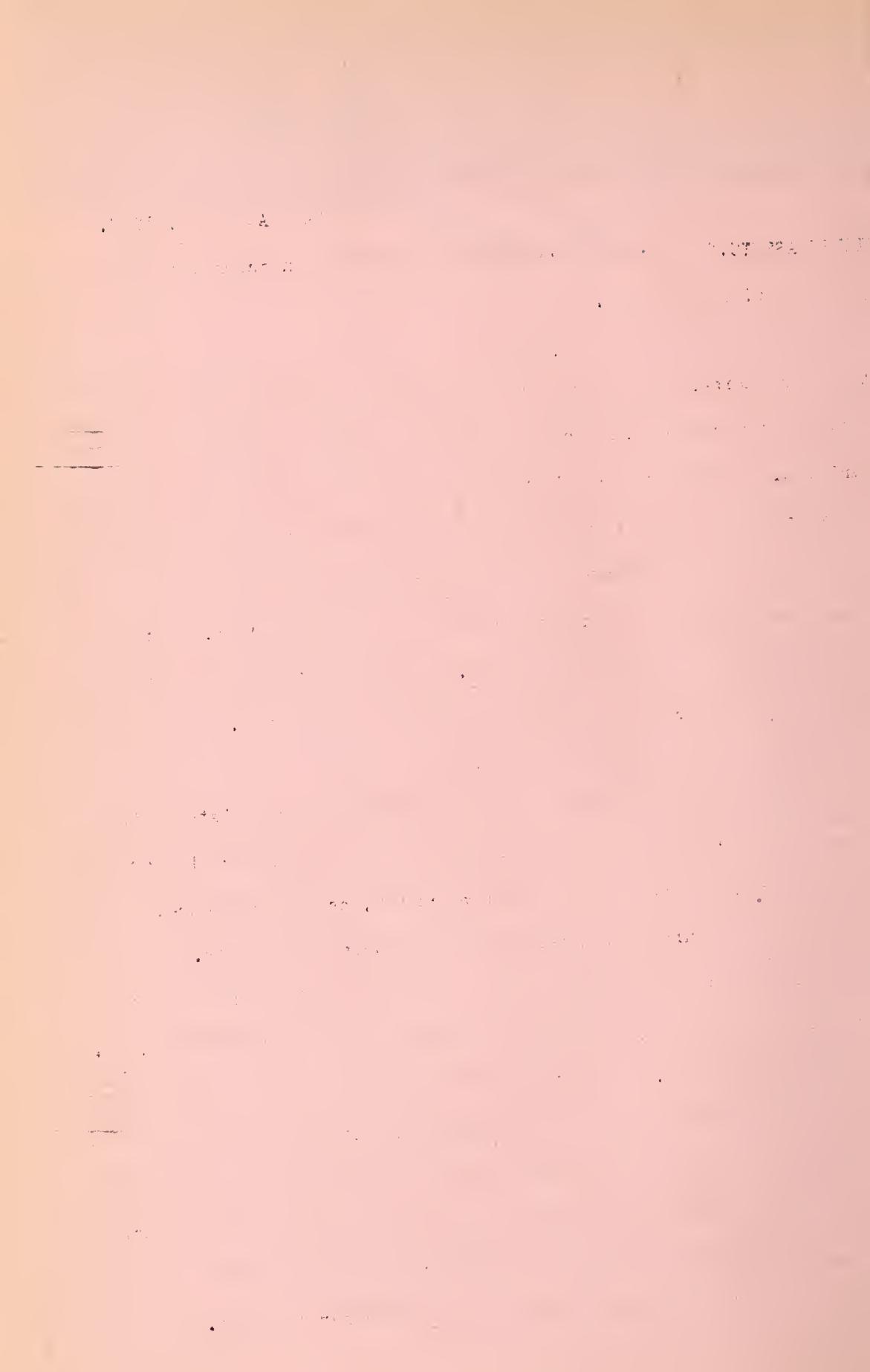
Subject: "HIDDEN ASSETS." Information from the soil conservation scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Wartime has sharpened and developed the natural instinct that many women have for ferreting out waste of one kind and another, either in their households or in their communities. Maybe your work in waste prevention has been to collect clean fats for explosives, or to salvage scrap, or to gather up jars for canning. Or maybe you are one of those homemakers who prevents waste with needle and scissors--mending or remodeling clothing to make it do a little longer. You prevent waste of good food in the home by good care. You see that all the Victory garden products the family can't eat fresh are preserved in some way. Or you lend a hand in harvesting crops in your neighborhood.

Today we have some suggestions from soil conservation scientists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture for further prevention of waste, especially around farm homes. Most farmsteads have hidden assets which you, as an experienced homemaker, can recognize if you turn your attention from indoors to outdoors.

No doubt you know already where there is a patch of wild plums, or a wild cherry tree, or some currants or high-bush cranberries, or an elderberry bush..... on your own land or not far away. On many farms there is more or less land that won't grow crops, like field borders, wet, marshy spots, ponds, alkaline or acid areas, gullies, rocky outcrops, sand dunes, ditch and stream banks, scrub woodland. It doesn't take a thrifty woman long to see that although these waste corners are no good for farm crops, they may grow other things that would be very useful in wartime, to supplement the family food or serve other purposes.



For example, a field that is too acid for garden vegetables, or one that has rocks scattered through it, may grow an abundance of blueberries or huckleberries. Wild blackberries and dewberries will flourish along a fence row where they have support. Cranberries grow in moist, marshy places. Wild barberries make delicious tart jelly. Wild grape vines may be twining themselves on some of the trees that border your farm woodlands, and if you've ever eaten "fox" grape jelly you know what to do with this fine fruit.

So look about and see if Ma Nature has already started any of these wild food crops on your land or nearby. If you don't find them at home, maybe you can help the old lady along a little by transplanting bushes or cuttings, with an eye to the future. All the wild fruit you can gather and preserve will help out the supply of other fruits for next winter.

Then all through the growing season you can find other good food plants growing in neglected spots,--from watercress to wild mint. Did you know that you can cook and eat parts of many familiar plants such as the leaves and stems of marsh marigolds....the bulbs of wild leeks and onions...the first leaves of chicory or "ragged sailor",....young leaves of stinging nettles...the young shoots and starchy rootstock of cat-tails, and many others? Also the many wild spring greens, like dandelions, sorrel, purslane, mustard, cress, and so on. It's fascinating to learn to know and use these wild food plants. Many of them either grow now, or would grow, in odd, wasted corners of the farmstead, if you give them a chance.

One of the most valuable effects of planting gullies and worn-out parcels of land with soil-binding plants like grasses, legumes and shrubs, is that you increase wild life food and cover. Rabbits, quail, and other games are good food. They become more abundant where they find protection, not only where you are saving the land from further erosion, but along fencerows and in wooded patches where there is no farm planting.

and the corresponding \mathcal{L} and \mathcal{L}' are given by

the \mathcal{L} and \mathcal{L}' are given by

Hazel nut and filbert trees are often used to stop erosion, and they, too, give you something good to eat for your trouble in getting them started. True, it takes several years to get nut crops. But meantime, watch the growth of those soil-saving trees, and eventually they'll yield a food crop.

A wet, marshy stretch in cool climates will often support fur-bearing animals, such as rabbits or muskrats, which are not only good for fur, but are good food, too. Trappers now save the carcasses of these small game animals to be processed for glycerine for explosives, and the fur is used for various kinds of military clothing.

Speaking of wet places on farm property, if you have a clean farm pond or brook, you are in luck, because you can have fish for the dinner-table. Your local representative of the Soil Conservation Service, the County agent or State Conservation Commission can tell you where to get desirable young fish or eggs for stocking the pond. With a pond you can also have barnyard ducks, and with larger water facilities, you may attract wild game birds.

Still another possibility for the waste corners and spaces of a farmstead is planting clover and other honey-producing flowers and shrubs, to attract bees. A colony of bees that find plenty of flower nectar nearby helps you in several ways. It provides delicious honey for your table, beeswax to sell, and aids you in producing other farm crops that need bees for cross-pollination.

These are just a few of the possible ways odd uncultivated spots around your home may contain "hidden assets". Once discovered, you will not want to waste any of them.

